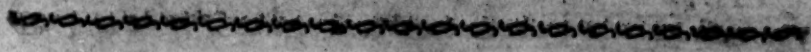
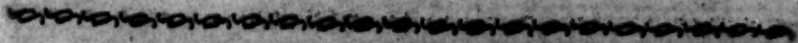


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Amherst  
N.H.



CHARLES H. ATHERTON'S ORATION.



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CHARLES H. ATTENTION ORATION

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AN  
ORATION,  
PRONOUNCED  
IN THE FIRST PARISH AT AMHERST, N. H.  
ON THE  
ANNIVERSARY  
OF  
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

JULY 4, 1798.

By CHARLES H. ATHERTON.

"The nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave."

"May the happiness of the people of the United States, under the auspices of LIBERTY, be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation, which is yet a stranger to it."

*Washington's Farewell Address.*

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PRINTED AT AMHERST,  
By SAMUEL PRESTON.  
JULY, 1798.



AMHERST, JULY 4, 1798.

CHARLES H. ATHERTON, Esq.

BY the unanimous Vote of the subscribers for the Public Dinner, we are directed to request, for the press, a copy of the Oration this day delivered by you, and permit us to add, Sir, that this vote accords highly with the individual desire of this Committee.

ROBERT FLETCHER,  
ROBERT MEANS,  
JONATHAN SMITH.

JULY 5, 1798.

GENTLEMEN,

THE request of my fellow citizens is complied with.—Accept my thanks for your particular approbation, and suffer me to add, that could the author flatter himself, that the following sentiments are calculated to excite “sensations purely American,” to awaken that dignified self regard, that INDEPENDENCE of feeling, which while it disdains the threats, is superior to the caresses of any foreign power, which has been, is, must ever be, the main pillar and support of our NATIONAL Independence; he should regard his intentions, as having a claim to the indulgence of the public.

I am, Gentlemen,

With considerations of esteem and respect,

Your most obedient and

Very humble servant,

CHARLES H. ATHERTON.

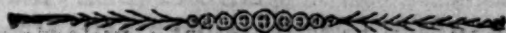
THE COMMITTEE.







## AN ORATION.



MY MUCH RESPECTED FELLOW CITIZENS,

THE twenty third anniversary of the independence of the United States has revolved upon us under circumstances, which though far from being discouraging, are calculated to awaken our vigilance for its security.

To take a principal part in the commemoration of an event, which has given this day peculiar importance, and stamped it as the natal day of the political sovereignty of this country; to the origin of which there are many living witnesses, but which, though not remote, is too early in the history of America to be the object of the speaker's recollection, may demand of him an apology. But his assurance, that it is a blessing to confirm the acquisition and eternize the existence of which, the aspiration of every heart present unites, is to him a sure pledge of the benevolence of the audience, that he has the honor to address.

To that wisdom, which decided, to that energy, which executed in the day of our trouble, to those events, which raised the American character to the summit of fame, to the heroes, whose bones are now mouldering in the soil of the nation for whose liberties they bled, we, feel, we render, a grateful tribute of veneration and respect. History does justice to their merit; pillars erected to renown remind the traveller that "*here we fought, bled and fell in defence of our country's rights.*" But there is engraven on the living tablets of the heart, a sweet remembrance, more honorary, than records, and more durable, than the wasting monuments of human architecture.

AN elucidation of the causes, which may blast, and of the principles, which may give eternal verdure to the dear bought honors of this day, would even to an auditory of the departed spirits of the unfortunate brave, be more acceptable, than a comment on their individual exploits. Over these, therefore, we will spread a mantle of respectful silence, and hasten to objects more immediately connected, with the perpetuation of the blessings, which, we have now assembled to commemorate.

BUT in our rapid career over years of peril, wisdom, prowess and victory, in which America gathered a rich and an abundant harvest of glory,

## AN ORATION.

we should be deaf to the claims of justice, if we omitted to render a suitable tribute of grateful remembrance, to the blunders of a corrupt and hoodwinked ministry, when groping after the deceptive phantom of colonial subjugation.

WE will retrace the history of the United States, about ten years, and from that stand, as an observatory, we will view the situation of this country. Are there any causes for the divisions with which we have been lacerated, for the rude contest for Liberty, either by her real or pretended friends, and which has almost torn her robes from her limbs, it shall be our object to draw them into view. Are there any appearances in our political horizon, indicating the storms and eruptions, which have since burst over our heads, we will unawed point them out.

WE behold a nation, having risen in vindication of her rights, to repel the unjust aggressions and the still more dangerous pretensions of a foreign power. She pursued her object with the magnanimity of conscious rectitude. Here we trace no footsteps of cruelty. The specious and fatal argument of necessity had yet found no place in the code of revolutionary law. An atheistical philosopher had yet invented no metaphysical guillotines. America erected no scaffold for the



immolation of her sons. No political heresy of sentiment, was a watchword for slaughter; but a humane toleration of opinion clearly evinced, that the country understood the liberties for which they contended. The object of our independence was pursued with a moderation, a justice, a mild humanity, which has reflected on the event an irradiation of glory, that will outlive the blaze of its victories.

WE behold a government, the choice of her most profound deliberations, come into exercise under the administration of her tried patriots. Here we remark the origin of a spirit, which like a baleful meteor portended darkness and storm. The unavoidable preference of one character to another in the distribution of the higher offices of state, left disappointment festering in the breasts of those, who from a high appreciation of their services, from ambition and from a vanity inseparable from human nature, regarded their claims as secondary to none. Envy swore in the court of malice, that she would be revenged on her superiors; and her minions waited only for occurrences to form a breast work, from behind which they might direct their deadly weapons and batter down the fortress, that was so unfortunate as to be commanded by persons better than themselves.

WE remark likewise a violent prejudice against a nation, with whom we had contended, originated and sustained by the injuries and resentments of a recent war, and cherished and fomented by a cabinet, the darling object of whose policy it was, to keep alive an eternal enmity between her and the United States.

It requires no political sagacity to observe, that the tardy, though acceptable assistance, afforded by France in our struggle for independence, had impressed this country with views partial to her interests. An unwillingness on our part to scrutinize the motives, while receiving the benefits, and the dexterity of a nation, never known to undervalue her merits, gave to this interference the name of benevolence, for which they modestly demanded gratitude.

SUCH was the excess of these prejudices, that many of the most virtuous friends of the American liberties would have thought themselves perfectly secure in entrusting the jewel of their independence to the safe keeping of French generosity, while England was thrust out of the pale of civilized nations, and to treat with her was regarded impious, as bending the knee to Baal.

To feel a sense of injury, when opposing an enemy, gives vigour to the warrior, and dignifies the patriot; but to harbour sensations of anger, malice or revenge, after the ratification of peace, is a deviation from true glory. These feelings, however, of hatred and affection, had their existence, and mutually co-operated in committing this country in some future war with France against Great Britain, in defiance of sound policy and the dictates of morality, and in impelling us to a disregard of that dignified sentiment, contained in the declaration of independence, "to hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, and in peace friends." Nothing was wanting but a collision of the powers, who wield the interests of Europe, and whose jarrings make the world a theatre of intrigue, to give to our prejudices and partialities a contentious and alarming aspect.

THE grievances and oppressions of France had long been the object of our most sincere commiseration. A reformation of the government and a redress of its injuries was a darling theme of American friendship; and it was not long, ere the trump of Gallic emancipation blew the flame of enthusiasm in this country to an indescribable height. In the apprehensions of many, the millennium of universal liberty was at hand, and every movement in the French revolution was regarded



as a progression towards ameliorating the sad condition of humanity.

FRANCE witnessing the electric joy, which diffused itself throughout the United States at her successes, and well knowing, that time had not yet effaced the old grudge against a nation, to which she is an hereditary enemy, calculated with certainty upon the assistance of America in hostilities already commenced against Great Britain. Under the specious pretext of a common cause, France was to have monopolized the commerce of the United States, and cramped her rival by depriving her of a material branch of her trade. We were to be compensated for the horrors of war, and the loss of the manufacturing industry of England, by rich cargoes of ribbons and fans.

BUT the proffered boon and the political intoxication of a part of the country afforded to our government, no sufficient reason, to launch the United States into the ocean of war, where all was tempest and hazard, without any probable prospects of gain. The proclamation for neutrality was made, and the people sanctioned it by their representatives.

It was not long ere the French revolution began to disappoint the expectations of its best

friends,\* and to shew its resemblance to a fabled wonder of antiquity in having the head of a human being; but the tail of a serpent. America, however, still the enthusiast of France, fixed its eyes upon the perfect shapes of the child, which in the dialect of the day was called the second born of liberty, and like a fond mother, tried to forget, that it was a monster.

THE cool decision of the American government, not to make ourselves a party in the war, which was deluging Europe in blood, called forth the intriguing energies of the French cabinet. A determination to draw a voluntary or forced aid from all the world in a war, which was now implausibly called a war in favor of the injured rights of man, prompted her to put into operation in this country the same machinery of revolt, by which she has secured unbounded aggrandizement in Europe, and poured out the vials of her wrath upon the nations, who have drank the poison of her cup.

\* That is, after, the justice and virtuous moderation of La Fayette grew intolerable to the unprincipled characters raised to rule, from the dregs of society by political ferment. The President of the United States in his answer to one of the late addresses made to him, says, "Since the commencement of the French Republic, if we except hypocritical professions of extravagant love of our people, I have seen nothing in the conduct of that government in Europe, or that of her Ministers here, but unwarrantable depredations, unjust exactions, imperious demands, and contumelious language."

WE have seen printing presses and the mercenary talents of their editors, devoted to her interests, and like machines formed for the purposes of counteraction, and as if directed by a fatal necessity, uniformly opposing and calumniating the measures of our government. We have seen her revolutionary societies established, and by the electric rapidity of their communications giving concert to opposition, and sounding the tocsin of false alarm from one extremity of the continent to the other. And what is still stranger, we have seen under the name of friendship for the people, a battery formed against the people's government, from which have issued the most unheard of calumnies. By the dexterity of her councils and the daring enterprize of her ministers, she has marshalled every particle of discontent in the country into a subserviency to her views. Nothing that could impart ardor to the virtuous partialities and embitter the honest prejudices of this country; nothing that could flatter the disappointed, and allure the rapacious has been left unessayed. No exertions have been wanting, that could excite suspicions against, and induce the people to abandon, a government, which the all grasping Republic of France could not controul.

AN instrument, which adjusted subsisting difficulties between this country and the power,



with whom we had been at war, and laid the foundation for a lasting peace between the two nations, as it removed a main object of French policy farther from her reach, could not fail of being the object of peculiar opposition. Then did we experience the efficacious means of France in this country. Her printing presses teemed with misrepresentation, and the British treaty was made the rallying point of party to thousands ignorant of its contents.

THE bottomless pit of abuse was laid open, and the destroying angel of division directed its blasts to the deathless laurels of WASHINGTON's fame. WASHINGTON, great and good name ! By Heaven destined to be twice thy country's saviour. With what unshaken firmness didst thou oppose thy breast to the envenomed shafts of this hidden warfare, more dangerous, than the open violence of arms, and they fell, like the bolts of British thunder, harmless at thy feet. Do any wounds afflict thy bosom ? Oh ! let the balm of thy country's love heal them. America shall be unworthy her liberties, and the name of an American shall be a reproach, when thy services shall cease to warm the heart with gratitude, or thy virtues cease to be

" The people's prayer, the glad diviner's theme,  
The young man's vision, and the old man's dream."

WHEN we recollect the proffers of fraternity, generosity and protection, which deluded the people of Holland and Belgium;\* when we recollect that printing presses and private societies formed the van and paved the way for the revolutionizing armies of France; that one of these powers has dwindled to skeleton by her deadly bug, and that the other has been made to drink the cup of humiliation to its lowest dregs; when we recollect the threats, and the actual execution of an appeal from the government to the people of the United States, as if they were, or could be made to be, at variance; when we recollect the alarming, insulting and mutinous insinuations of Barrast to a disgraced American minister, the enthusiast for once must see the truth, and the sceptic cease to doubt of the origin and tendency of the clamour against the government of the United States. Rejoice, my countrymen. America demands the joy. Rejoice, that you have not seen in this country the establishment of a revolutionary tribunal, and under their auspices, a scaffold, where upon the charge already fabricated, that "*they were slooping to the suggestions of their former tyrants,*" you might have seen WASHINGTON and ADAMS marked as

\* See Harper's Address, and the extracts published in the VILLAGE MESSENGER of July 21, 1798.

† President of the Directory. See his speech to Munroe after his recall. Had he have said, "PEOPLE OF AMERICA! take of WASHINGTON's head and you will be free," it would not have been more pointed.

its prime victims.\* This might you have seen with unavailing astonishment, while an executioner was calmly regaling himself with a pinch of rappee.

PAINFUL is the task, to develop the hostile intentions of a nation, whom we have once called our ally; disagreeable is the necessity that makes it a duty sacredly binding.

THAT ambition and lust of power, which seems to have arrested the French revolution, left to America no exclusive favors to hope of her Republic. Her depredations on our commerce were indications of hostility. The rejection of a minister, however, deputed by the benevolent and moral policy of the United States, for the purposes of reconciliation, could not convince us, that we were to find an enemy in the nation, whom we have been proud to call our friend. The revival of this mission in three of the most respectable characters in America, as it evinced a sincere disposition on our part for peace with the French Republic, was gratifying to the United States in general, and supported the few remaining hopes of a reconciliation. But the conclusion of this

\* See the same speech. RECOLLECT the insinuations, which have wounded your own ears. Oh! what a terrible purification, would the United States have been subject to, under the regenerating controul of France.—Stop, as this humane government do not shed blood now, they might only have been Bartholomew'd, that is, transported to Cayenne.—Who would not have followed them in voluntary exile?



embassy, calculated from the dignity of the persons forming it, from the amplitude of their powers, and from its being the second attempt at negotiation, to flatter the vanity and soothe the ambition of any nation on earth, without effecting a single object of their mission, has clouded every prospect of peace. The still encreasing plunder of our property, while the American ministers were waiting, unaccredited, at the footstool of the Directory, by their authority, and by decrees, which have emptied every breeze, freighted with our commerce, and every tide laden with our wealth, into the coffers of her rapacity, leave on the mind no doubt of the hostility of her views, and the extremity to which she is determined to drive us. Her exaction of a gratuity, and the stipulation of a loan, as preliminaries of their reception, enforced by the necessity of our compliance, if France, all powerful in her partizans, make the demand, was, like the asserted "right of taxing us in all cases whatever," staring us in the face with the death's head of unconditional submission.

THE opiates of fraternity administered by one hand, while she has been inflicting upon us the most cruel scourges with the other, her pretended friendship and the bleeding interests of our country, instruct us, to beware of the whited outsides of her political pharisees. They go about with

phylacteries of generosity on their foreheads, and commandments of liberty on the hems of their garments ; but they are the seducers of the unsuspecting, and the devourers of the weak.

THE declaration of her executive, that " she ought to become the model and arbiter of nations," her undisguised attempts to make herself the despot of Europe, and the arbitress of the world, the murdered liberties of Switzerland, and the bartered independence of Venice, warn us, with more than archangel eloquence, to rally round the standard of government, and to be ready to defend the palladium of our sovereignty.

AMERICANS! Shall I alarm your fears by portraying the terrors of the storm, that cannot be averted ? No ; but I hail you as having, this moment, firmly planted your feet on the threshold of safety. Union affords a barrier, that bids defiance to foreign aggression, and it hath pervaded our land with healing in its wings. Whatever causes may have conspired to create a difference of sentiment on the minor topics of politics, on the grand subject of our independence, can there be more than one opinion ? It was the dear purchase of treasure and blood ; and if Americans can prostitute it by the payment of a single barley

corn of tribute to any nation on earth, base indeed must be their degeneracy.

WE have escaped an "habitual hatred" for one nation, and an "habitual fondness" for another, which, while calling ourselves free, made us really slaves and dupes, slaves to our prejudices, dupes to our affections, and while contenting ourselves with the bauble of nominal sovereignty, degraded our independence, (Oh! could the recording angel drop a tear upon the truth and blot it out forever) degraded our INDEPENDENCE, I say, into a shameful servility to France. America is at length sovereign. We are at last FREEMEN.

WE have escaped the contagion of principles engendered in a revolution, whose page is disgraced with the massacre of two hundred and fifty thousand women, and two hundred and thirty thousand children, where the generous virtue of man has not been sufficient to shield from political violence the fairer, and the infant part of the human race; but they too have been sacrificed with unrelenting barbarity, at the blood-stained altar of his pretended rights.

WE have escaped the demoralizing influence of a revolution, where christianity has been formally annulled, and its sabbath erased from the



calendar ; where the belief, "that death is an eternal sleep," has forced every barrier of vice and every safeguard to virtue ; where a contempt for the sacred obligations of an oath, a disregard of all social ties and civil subordination, and where the maxim, that "all means however profligate are sanctioned by the end," opened upon the human race a new Pandora's box of evils, without any hope at the bottom. These have we escaped, and from their progress in Europe, and their aiming a death stroke at the base of civil society by unloosing the world from its grand hinges of morality and religion, they are more terrible, than the ravages of the sword, and portend greater ills to wretched humanity, than did ever the triumph of the Pope, or the victories of Mahomet.

EXPERIENCE, the wise instructress of man, has spread before us the chart of desolated Europe, and taught us, with what prudence the finger of reform ought to be directed, and with what energy the rude arm of innovation must be restrained, lest in undermining the establishments of time, the fabric they supported should crush us in its fall.

THE pleasing and delusive phantom of national generosity, we have given to the winds. It was the dream of a hypochondriac, and more fantastic, than the vagaries of a sectary. The indi-

vidual, who suspends his felicity on personal favor, wretchedness has called her own. The nation, who trusts its independence to the generosity of another, have already yoked themselves for vassals.

" Oh ! momentary grace of mortal men,  
Which we more hunt for, than the grace of God.  
Who builds his hopes in air of your fond looks,  
Lives, like a drunken sailor on a mast,  
Ready with every nod to tumble down  
Into the fatal bowels of the deep."

LET us Americanize our feelings, nor suffer our own interests to go to ruin, while we are gossiping about the welfare of our neighbours.

WE have a constitution, the work of our own wisdom, administered by persons of our own choice. As such, the government and its administrators deserve our most generous support and confidence. Had we a government of fraud or violence, had we a monarch imposed upon us by the wayward hand of chance, had we an hereditary senate, whose pretensions to opulence, power and merit depended on the fortuitous circumstance of birth, well might the people view in their governors an interest opposed to their welfare, well might they exercise political jealousy, well might the person, who should espouse the cause of the people, in despite of the allurements

of wealth and the patronage of the great, and nobly oppose himself to the over-bearing aristocracy of his country, well might he have his name embalmed to posterity as the patriot of his day. But in a government like ours, founded in public opinion, a government, emanating from the spirit, the genius and the feelings of the people, the man, who uniformly opposes its measures, is, with the certainty of all calculations not mathematical, at issue with the WILL of his country, that will to which he owes obedience, and far from being the patriot of a representative government, he is only the APE of a patriot under a MONARCHY. Let the people be convinced of the truth of this reasoning, founded on the nature of their government, and they will rend asunder the veil of mock patriotism, and be able to distinguish their friends from their flatterers.

IN the crisis, which is dawning upon us, we do not look around in vain for objects, which inspire the most flattering hopes.

SUFFER me to congratulate you upon the abilities and virtue, which adorn the chief magistracy of the United States. Genius, habits of thinking, all the ties of honor and interest, all the allurements of fame attach the President to his country, and conspire to render him the most



undoubted friend of America. The pillar of his glory, founded on the broad and firm pedestal of talents, science, patriotism, law and liberty, wants only a virtuous and patriotic administration of the government, the image of his earliest and fondest researches, as a chaplet, to cap and give it perfection.

IN the rising generation, you have a pleasing pledge of a vigorous defence of the rights, the hard earnings of their ancestors. At the altar of Liberty have they sworn, that they will defend with their lives, the soil of their fathers, this "dear, dear" inheritance of plenty and freedom.

AMONG the firmest friends of America, we view the veteran asserters of her rights, and assure ourselves, that the arm, which was nerved to repel the aggressions of a British Monarch, will not fall lifeless by its side, when summoned to resist the encroachments of a French Directory.

ABOVE all, my countrymen, you have a pure and religious source of consolation in the measures of your government. A most critical review of them finds nothing for reproach. The administration of the federal government exhibits an integrity and rectitude seldom to be found in the history of nations. Marked with a sacred ad-

herence to the laws of nations, and a moral regard to subsisting, particular engagements, it is defensible at all points. The American Eagle has not ceased to extend to the world her olive branch of peace; it is in the last resort only, that she draws her arrows from their quiver. When all human means have been essayed for peace, in vain; when we are urged to war by the unrelenting mandates of necessity, it is then, in the TERRIBLE APPEAL OF ARMS, we can look with confidence for success, to the GOD OF BATTLES.

F I N I S.

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